

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR WALES' TOP GOLFERS

September 5, 2017.

Top golfers in Wales have a chance to apply for backing at the highest level for the first time, in a new move aimed at helping potential stars on a more individual basis.

The new Performance Programmes are intended to offer the greatest support to the most committed players by establishing personalized plans - but also to prevent any players falling through the net, such as career amateurs who may have university, work or family commitments.

“We aim to create world class players and show younger players that there is a pathway there which will allow them to do that, but are also aiming to maintain strong Welsh teams in the future,” explained Golf Union of Wales performance director Gillian O’Leary.

In the past players have been selected for Wales squads and then received broadly similar levels of support, the approach has changed so all players will be able to apply for individual assistance and funding, giving the players greater ownership of their performance plans.

Applications will be open until September 15, with further details on the Golf Union of Wales website.

“We have made it an application process, rather than an immediate selection process, because there are always some people who pop up, or whose circumstances have changed,” added O’Leary.

“This way we will be aware of everybody who wants to be considered for selection. There will be several layers of support from top internationals down to academy players.

“The aim is to give the right players the right support at the right time. The application process seeks to understand how players feel the Golf Union of Wales can best help them achieve their goals in the short term and long term.

“The players need to think about what support they want and why they would want to be involved, rather than having a one size fits all solution with the squads coming together for training 20 to 30 times a year.

“In terms of the support offered to players, we will give them a bit and then add as they earn it rather than giving a lot and then potentially taking it away.”

“If they are accepted onto a programme, technical aspects of the game will still be delivered as in the past but there will now be a greater emphasis on training players to perform in the international tournament environment.

“It will be about what they experience in international championships, the processes they go through on and off the course, course strategy and nailing those sort of things to align their training with the demands of international golf and the pressure this brings.

“The changes come on the back of what I have observed after starting the job this year and also based on the feedback and reports I have gathered from coaches, support staff, volunteers and the players themselves over the summer.”

The core objective of the National Performance Programme is to produce Great Britain and Ireland internationals and players in the top 100 of the world amateur golf rankings.

Below that will sit the National Support Programme to help players represent Wales, the National Transition Programme to support players who have represented Wales at junior level to progress to senior level, as well as the Aspire Performance Squad to prepare young players to represent Wales in the future.

Finally there will be an Academy Squad to develop talented young players, which will be subject to assessment days, with plans for a Pre-Academy Programme to commence in January 2018.

Members of each programme will be announced in early October.